

## Amendments to the Claims

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the above-referenced application.

1-13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) Method of promoting growth in an animal, said method comprising the step of:

feeding said the animal with an effective amount of an F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain in an amount effective to promote growth in the animal.

15. (Currently Amended) Method of homogenizing growth among a herd of animals, said method comprising the step of:

feeding said the animals with an effective amount of an F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain in an amount effective to homogenize growth among the herd.

16. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 14 or 15, wherein the step of feeding comprises feeding orally animal is fed orally.

17. (Currently Amended) The method according to any one of claims 14 to claim 16, wherein the step of feeding comprises feeding animal is fed with the F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain in association with an acceptable carrier, wherein the carrier is selected from the group consisting of a solid feed acceptable carrier or a liquid feed acceptable carrier, or combinations thereof.

18. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein the carrier comprises a solid feed acceptable carrier is comprising a common solid feedstuff.

19. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein the carrier comprises a liquid feed acceptable carrier is comprising water.

20. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein the carrier comprises a liquid feed acceptable carrier is comprising milk.

21. (Currently Amended) ~~The method according to any one of claims~~ The method of claim 14 or 15 to 20, wherein the effective amount is at least about  $5^E7$   $5\times10^7$  CFU of F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain per animal.

22. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 17 ~~14 or 15~~, wherein the effective amount ranges from about  $5^E7$   $5\times10^7$  to about  $5^E9$   $5\times10^9$  CFU of F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain per animal.

23. (Currently Amended) ~~The method according to any one of claims~~ The method of claim 14 or 15 to 22, wherein the F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain consists of the *Escherichia coli* strain deposited at the International Depository Authority of Canada (IDAC) on January 21, 2005 under accession number IDAC 210105-01, mutants or variants thereof.

24. (Currently Amended) ~~The method according to any one of claims~~ The method of claim 14 to 23, wherein the animal is selected from the group consisting of a post-weaning animal, and a post-hatching animal, and combinations thereof.

25. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-weaning animal is aged from about 10 to about 28 days old.

26. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-hatching animal is aged from about 1 to about 7 days old.

27. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 24 ~~or 25~~, wherein the animal is a post-weaning animal is a pig.

28. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 24 ~~or 25~~, wherein the animal is a post-weaning animal is a mouse.

29. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 24 or 26, wherein the animal is a post-hatching animal is poultry animal.

30. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 29, wherein the poultry animal is a chicken.

31. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein the animals of the herd are selected from the group consisting of a post-weaning animal, a post-hatching animal, and combinations thereof.

32. (New) The method according to claim 31, wherein the animals are post-weaning animals aged from about 10 to about 28 days old.

33. (New) The method according to claim 31, wherein the animals are post-hatching animals aged from about 1 to about 7 days old.

34. (New) The method according to claim 31, wherein the animals are post-weaning pigs.

35. (New) The method according to claim 31, wherein the animals are post-weaning mice.

36. (New) The method according to claim 31, wherein the animals are post-hatching poultry animals.

37. (New) The method according to claim 36, wherein the poultry animals are chickens.